



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Native Heritage Month

Each November, Native American Heritage Month celebrates the rich histories and diverse cultures of Indigenous people and communities around the world, but in Aruba, "Etnia Nativa," which means "native ethnicity," has the daily honor of celebrating the traditions and contributions of Native Arubans in a meaningful, long-lasting way.

Since 1971, this private educational initiative pioneering in heritage themes and indigenous values has taken the lead in contributing to the island's culture, conveying heritage passion and ancestral knowledge into an unforgettable experience. Guided by the principles that Native Arubans are still here and Native art and practice are connected throughout time, Etnia Nativa connects the artistic achievements of its heritage curator through traditional and contemporary means. Its staging presentation of objects, art work, texts, images, etc. creates a vibrant and immersive native link that aims to tell the authentic story of the island, delving into the richness of its heritage and linking ancient objects with contemporary artworks. Storytelling focuses on the authentic. It's about a unique encounter inside an environment where the visitor lives in the past, gains knowledge about the present, and carries the experience into the future.

The exclusive private museum honors the native hereditary heritage by nurturing roots and preserving connections with its ancestors. It values the way of the Arubans and their lives before, during, and after the arrival of the Castilians and other colonial powers. Aruban people survived the time of the Dutch W.I.C., the colonial period, and two world wars. Today, the "progress" preaches globalization as a new world or-



der, demanding total submission. However, the native spirit is relentless and resistant, but Aruba must be protected from those who wish to line their pockets with its resources. This is essential if natives of the island are to live and harvest the moons to come. A catalytic quality of tribal and island community life was all they had to hold on. Whether it was planting maize, beans, squash, or cassava; hunting deer, rabbits, or iguanas; gathering wild fruits and vegetables; harvesting seafood; trading with the mainland and adjacent islands; or simply paying homage to the Creator.

Etnia Nativa's owner and concept developer is a multi-talented individual recognized for his skills as a printmaker, clay artist, amateur anthropologist, newspaper columnist, and more. His artistic expression involves a fusion of native influence and design, often expressed through geometric "glyphs" that reflect the traditional Arubans relationship to the environment. By weaving indigenous techniques and spiritual teachings into their work, they aim to honor and preserve cultural traditions.

Since 1971, native ethnicity's concept sprang out of the earth as an artistic and cultural experiment at "Shidaharaca Gallery" in Oranjestad. From 1994, it started to use the name "Etnia Nativa Art Gallery and Museum," occupying its own building, constructed from reusable materials, in the northwest part of the island, a neighborhood known as Westpunt, gaining recognition as the



only museum in Aruba that interprets native art, ancestral ceremonies, and the natural world as well as the colonial past of the ABC islands. It is where a native approach and native spirit vibrate in every corner of the dwelling and the only place that promotes Aruban native art and culture around the world.

Etnia Nativa recycles waste into art—in masks, paintings, rock carvings, sculptures, books, photos, antiques, plants, and dissected animals—inviting you to learn regarding our natives. We guarantee invaluable traditional knowledge and the intangible living heritage of Aruba's bygone generation. Follow the "native ethnicity" of Aruba thought Island Insight, cultural blog of this newspaper for topics like: The ancestors of Aruba—episode 110; Genetic Inheritance through mtDNA—episode 151; Aruba ancestral legacy I & II—episode 272/3.

Aware that the native Aruban heritage is often denied by government authorities and foreign authors, Etnia Nativa continues to firmly share its educational vision of the true Aruba's roots, celebrating Native Heritage Month once again.

If you are interested in learning the true identity of Aruba, booking a visit to Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum" of the Caribbean—would be a fantastic choice. It has been a trend setter since 1994, as a co-founder of projects such as Arikok National Park, the Archaeological Museum, and the Artisan Foundation, among others. Every week, our newspaper continues to share its valuable knowledge. Don't miss the opportunity to feel the island's spirit through learning real stories that are not just remembered; they resonate, they're felt, and they stir souls. WhatsApp +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com

